

ROAD TO #300

# SPAWN®

image

297

DIGITAL  
EDITION

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JASON  
SHAWN  
ALEXANDER



HISTORY  
OF SPAWN  
PART 2



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#### PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

The Redeemer and Cogliostro look back on Al Simmons and Spawn's history. Both quickly realize Spawn is a bigger foe than they ever imagined. They prepare themselves for a battle to the death.





"BECAUSE YOU AND YOUR ANGEL THUGS ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT FIGHTING THAN TRYING TO LEARN ANYTHING. YOU THINK SIMMONS AND WHAT HE'S BEEN DOING WITH HIS POWERS, IS A RECENT CHANGE?  
**NO!** THIS HAS BEEN YEARS IN THE MAKING!"

"AND SADLY, NONE OF US--INCLUDING ME!--HAVE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION. SO, HE'S NOT MERELY DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY. WHAT HE'S DOING HASN'T BEEN SEEN BEFORE."

**IT'S NEW!**

AND HE'S BANKING ON THE FACT WE HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO COUNTER HIM.

"BECAUSE WE DON'T. AND THAT SHOULD SCARE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU."

"AND IF YOU'RE WONDERING HOW I MISSED IT TOO? IT WAS BECAUSE MY OWN ARROGANCE BLINDED ME TO THE SUBTLE MOVES HE WAS MAKING. I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS JUST INSTINCTUALLY TO BEGIN WITH, BECAUSE HE COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN THAT FAR BACK HOW TO PLAN ALL OF THIS. AFTER HE SLAYED MALEBOLGIA, HE DIDN'T FOCUS HIS ANGER OR ENERGY ON HEAVEN OR HELL. NO. HE TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO THE HUMANS. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE BEGAN TO EMBRACE HIS PLACE IN THE SHADOWS. AND SOME IN RETURN TREATED HIM LIKE HE WAS THEIR KING."

**"WHY..?"**



"WHY DIDN'T HE WANT  
THE THRONE OF HELL?  
I NEVER UNDERSTOOD  
THAT UNTIL RECENTLY.  
WHY WOULDN'T HE  
WANT TO FILL THE  
VOID HE CAUSED  
BY KILLING  
MALEBOLGIA?"

"INSTEAD HE LET  
HEAVEN AND HELL  
FALL INTO CHAOS  
FIGHTING OVER THAT  
EMPTY THRONE  
OURSELVES.  
WHILE WE ALL GOT  
WEAKER, HE  
BEGAN TO  
GROW."

"AND THE PROPHECY THAT WE ALL  
WANTED TO ATTAIN...THE ONE THAT SAID:  
'HE WHO BECOMES THE NEW KING WILL  
BE THE MASTER OVER ALL THOSE WHO  
DO NOT SIT ON THE THRONE.'

"FOOLISHLY, GOD AND SATAN NEVER  
THOUGHT THAT MANTLE OF POWER  
THE PROPHECY SPOKE OF, COULD  
BE LOCATED ON EARTH."

"AND WE'VE ALL BEEN PAYING THE PRICE EVER SINCE."

"AND THOUGH SIMMONS KEPT SAYING HE WANTED NOTHING TO DO WITH BEING A SPAWN, INSTEAD HIS PRESENCE HAD THE OPPOSITE EFFECT. HE ATTRACTED DOZENS OF ENEMIES WHOSE ONLY PURPOSE WAS TO TRY AND BEAT HIM IN BATTLE. BECAUSE HE WORE THE SYMBIOTE COSTUME THEY THOUGHT HE WAS SOME MODERN DAY SUPER HERO. A MAN THEY COULD SIMPLY BEAT AND TAKE AWAY HIS POWER.

"ONE BY ONE THEY FELL AND YET THEY STILL CAME. THEIR EXISTENCE COMPLICATED OUR PLANS BECAUSE THEY WERE GETTING IN THE WAY OF US BEING ABLE TO GET TO SPAWN IN THE FASHION WE NEEDED.

"THESE VILLAINS, INSTEAD OF BEING A DETRIMENT TO SPAWN ACTUALLY BECAME A 'HUMAN SHIELD' AROUND HIM... AND THEY HAD NO IDEA THEY WERE HELPING SIMMONS EVERY TIME THEY ATTACKED HIM.

"MAKING IT SO HEAVEN AND HELL HAD TO WAIT ON THE SIDELINES FOR THEIR CHANCE TO STRIKE."





"BUT WE COULDN'T CONTROL OURSELVES, COULD WE? INSTEAD WE HAD TO JUMP IN, HOPING A DISTRACTED SPAWN WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR ONE OF US TO STEAL HIS SYMBIOTE. MAMMON, THAMUZ THE INQUISITOR, AND THE REST OF THEM...NOT ONLY FAILED IN THEIR ATTEMPTS AGAINST SIMMONS, THEY PREMATURELY TRIGGERED ARMAGEDDON."

"THIS AGAIN MADE SPAWN STONGER! PHYSICALLY HE WAS ACCELERATING AT A PACE NO OTHER SPAWN HAD EVER ACHIEVED."



"THERE ARE TWO PARTS TO SPAWN'S GROWTH. THE FIRST PART WAS HIS BODY. HE NEEDED TO BE PHYSICALLY TUNED TO HIS PEAK... AND WE TOO EASILY GAVE HIM REASONS TO PUSH HIS BODY TO THOSE LIMITS."

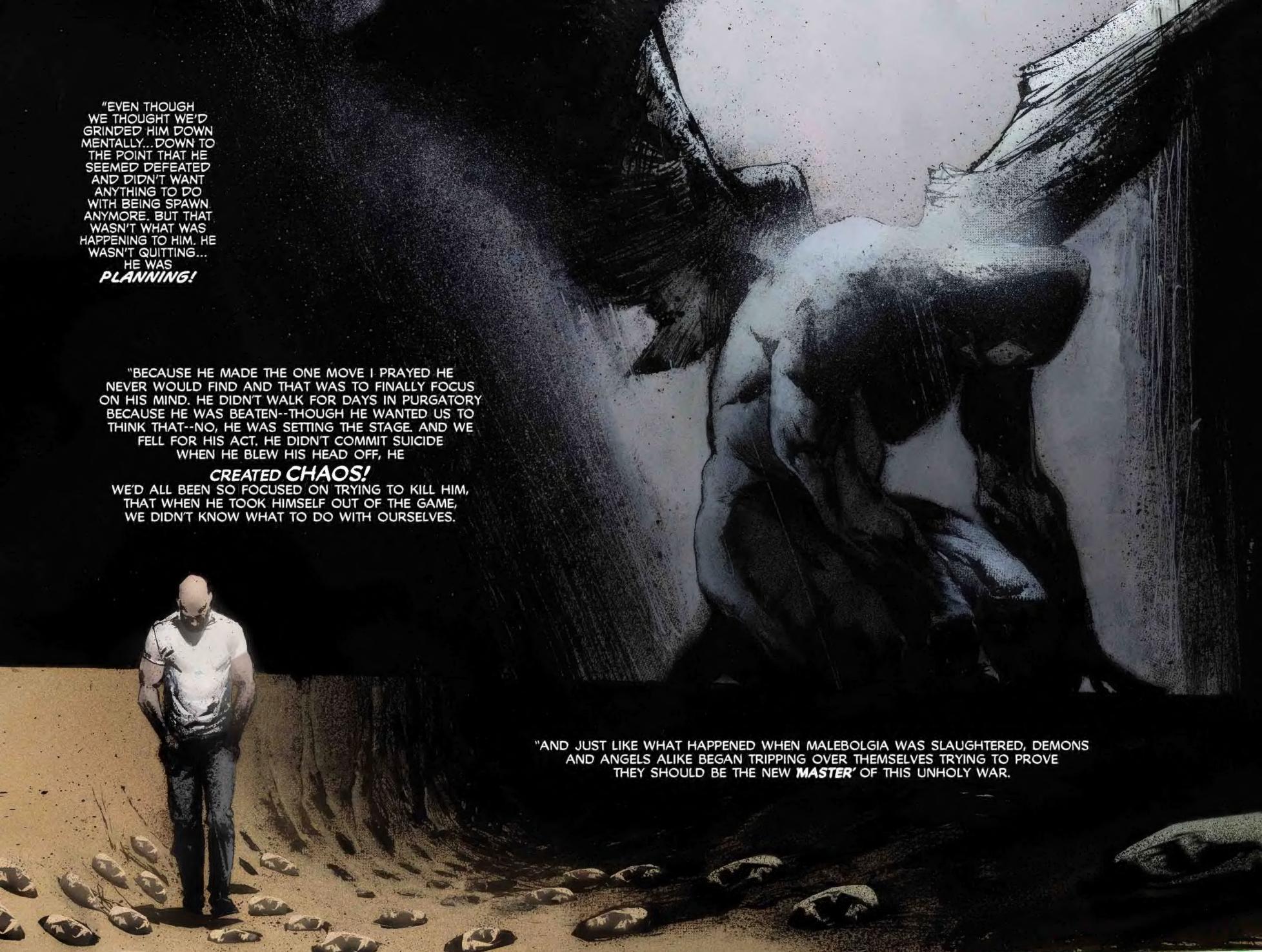
"DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TELLING YOU? EVERY ONE OF US, WE THOUGHT WE KNEW HOW TO BEAT HIM. BUT WHAT WE DID WASN'T SLOWING HIM DOWN--IT WAS BUILDING HIM INTO A KILLING MACHINE! WE WERE **STRENGTHENING HIM!**"

"EVERY ATTACK BROUGHT HIM A STEP CLOSER TO HONORING HIMSELF AND HIS SYMBIOTE. AND THAT POWER EVENTUALLY TRIGGERED A CONNECTION TO EVERY SPAWN THROUGH TIME. THAT'S HOW I WAS DRAWN TO HIM. HE PULLED ME IN, WHILE I THOUGHT I WAS IN CONTROL THE WHOLE TIME."

"THERE'S SOMETHING IN HIS SOUL, SOME DESIGN FLAW THAT MALEBOGIA MISSED WHEN HE CHOSE SIMMONS. AND THAT FLAW HAS NOW MADE HIM ABLE TO TAP INTO THE SOULS OF ALL SPAWNS FROM THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE!"

"AND THE ONLY THING THAT'S KEEPING ANY OF US ALIVE, IS THAT HE DOESN'T KNOW HE HAS THAT ABILITY YET. MAY YOUR GOD HELP US ALL IF HE EVER DISCOVERS THAT FACT. BECAUSE IF HE CAN CALL UP HIS OWN ARMY AGAINST US **HE WINS. HE WINS EVERYTHING!**"





"EVEN THOUGH WE THOUGHT WE'D GRINDED HIM DOWN MENTALLY... DOWN TO THE POINT THAT HE SEEMED DEFEATED AND DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH BEING SPAWN. ANYMORE. BUT THAT WASN'T WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HIM. HE WASN'T QUITTING... HE WAS PLANNING!"

"BECAUSE HE MADE THE ONE MOVE I PRAYED HE NEVER WOULD FIND AND THAT WAS TO FINALLY FOCUS ON HIS MIND. HE DIDN'T WALK FOR DAYS IN PURGATORY BECAUSE HE WAS BEATEN--THOUGH HE WANTED US TO THINK THAT--NO, HE WAS SETTING THE STAGE. AND WE FELL FOR HIS ACT. HE DIDN'T COMMIT SUICIDE WHEN HE BLEW HIS HEAD OFF, HE

**CREATED CHAOS!**

WE'D ALL BEEN SO FOCUSED ON TRYING TO KILL HIM, THAT WHEN HE TOOK HIMSELF OUT OF THE GAME, WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH OURSELVES.

"AND JUST LIKE WHAT HAPPENED WHEN MALEBOLGIA WAS SLAUGHTERED, DEMONS AND ANGELS ALIKE BEGAN TRIPPING OVER THEMSELVES TRYING TO PROVE THEY SHOULD BE THE NEW **MASTER** OF THIS UNHOLY WAR.



"SIMMONS HAD SET HIS TRAP AND HE MUST HAVE LAUGHED AT HOW EASILY WE ALL FELL INTO IT!"



"THE NEW HOST HE FOUND FOR THE COSTUME WAS JIM DOWNING. HE WASN'T SOME RANDOM SELECTION BY SIMMONS. DOWNING WAS THE SAME SPIRIT SIMMONS INHABITED DURING HIS FIRST FEW DAYS OF BECOMING SPAWN. AND TO SCREW WITH US FURTHER, DOWNING WAS ALSO THE FIRST BEING TO EVER WEAR A SYMBIOTE COSTUME WITHOUT BEING DEAD FIRST.

"THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN *ANOTHER CLUE* FOR US. BUT WE WERE BLIND TO THAT TOO. THINKING THAT A HUMAN WHO WASN'T DEAD, WHO HADN'T FELT THE HARSH TOUCH OF HELL, WOULD BE AN EASY TARGET.

"AND WHY NOT? THE SYMBIOTE ITSELF WAS STRUGGLING TO ADAPT TO ITS NEW HOST SO WHY WOULDN'T THIS BE A CHANCE TO FINALLY CAPTURE THE SYMBIOTE? THAT'S WHAT WE'VE ALL BEEN FIGHTING OVER, *ISN'T IT?*... FOR ONE OF US TO LORD OVER THE SPAWN COSTUME. THAT'S WHERE THE POWER RESIDES.

"WHATEVER SIMMONS IS PLANNING WE CAN'T FORGET OUR GOAL... TO STRIP HIM OF HIS COSTUME ONCE AND FOR ALL. AND TO MAKE SURE THERE'S NOT EVEN A SLIVER LEFT OF THE SYMBIOTE..."



"...BECAUSE THAT'S HOW HE RETURNED TO EARTH, BY KEEPING A PIECE OF HIS COSTUME. HE KNEW IT WOULD TRANSPORT HIM BACK WHEN HE WAS READY. BUT THE MOVE HE MADE, WHEN HE KILLED HIMSELF, WAS SO HE COULD LEARN OUR GAME! OF EVERYTHING HE IS DOING, THIS IS WHAT WE SHOULD BE MOST SCARED OF--HE DIDN'T LEAVE EARTH OUT OF DESPAIR, HE LEFT TO STUDY, TO TRAIN HIS MIND.

"AND HE DIDN'T JUST LEARN THE RULES OF OUR GAME... HE'S **MASTERED** THEM! TO THE POINT HE'S TURNING OUR ATTACKS BACK ON US! FOR YEARS HE FOUGHT TO NOT BE INVOLVED IN THIS WAR, TO NOT BE SPAWN. NOW, HE THRIVES ON THE BATTLES, TRYING TO FLUSH US OUT, BECAUSE WE CAN'T HIDE FROM HIM ANYMORE.

"HE SAW TO THAT WHEN HE LOCKED THE GATES ON BOTH HEAVEN AND HELL. HE TRAPPED US HERE ON EARTH WHEN HE SEALED THE '**DEAD ZONES**.' THE ONLY WAY ANY OF US HAD OF GETTING BACK HOME IS BLOCKED!

"NOW HE'S GOING TO HUNT US ONE BY ONE UNTIL WE CAN'T BOTHER ANOTHER HUMAN EVER AGAIN. THAT'S WHAT HE LEARNED WHEN HE WAS GONE IN THE '**BLACKNESS**' FOR ALL THOSE MONTHS...HOW TO DEFEAT HIS ENEMIES AT THEIR OWN GAME."



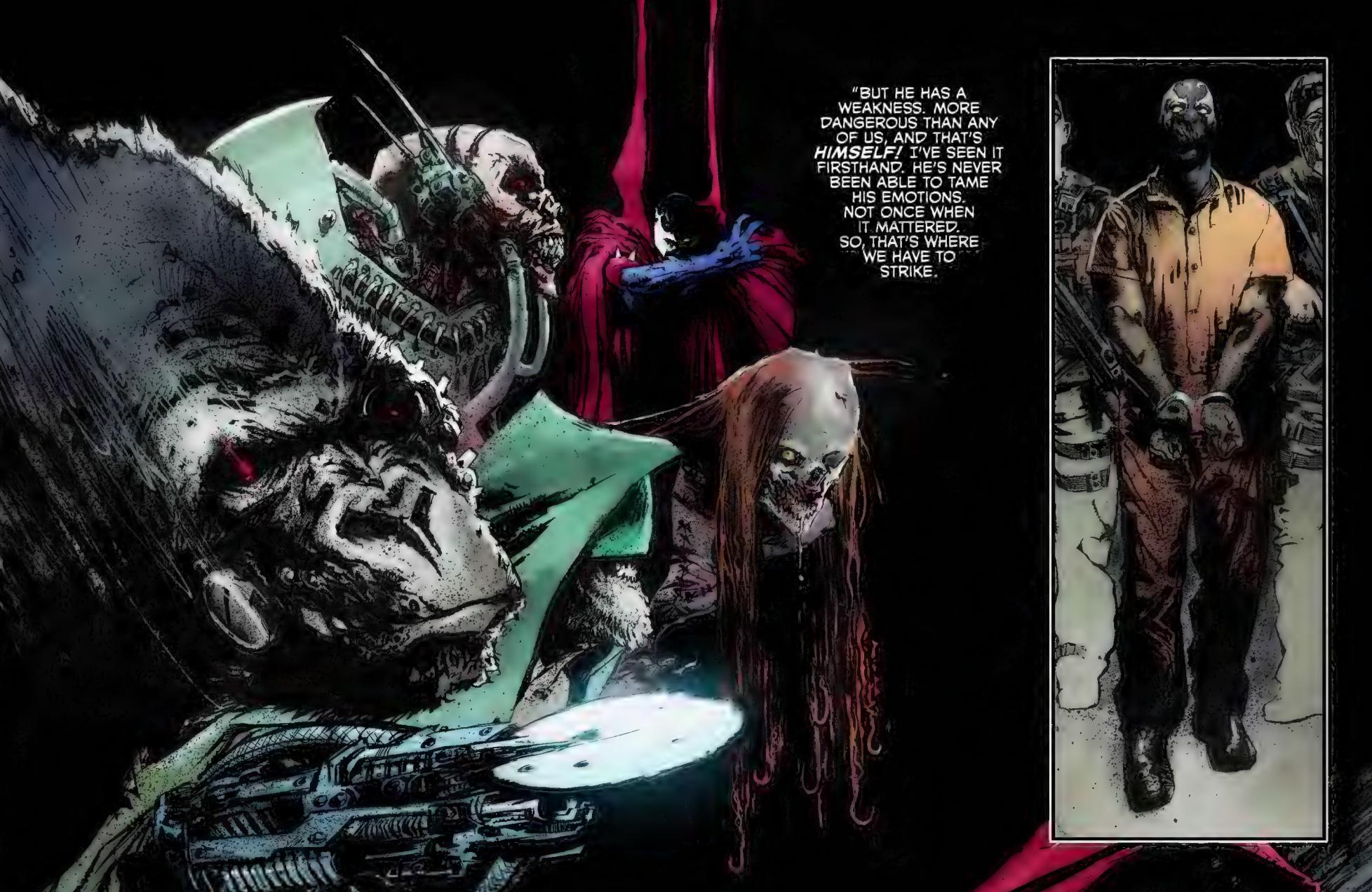
"AND WHOEVER KILLED HIS WIFE,  
NOT ONLY TOOK AWAY THE ONLY  
LEVERAGE WE HAD OVER HIM...THEY  
ALSO UNLEASHED HIS FURY!  
A FORCE SO POWERFUL HE SLAYED  
SATAN AND SEALED OFF ANY HOPE OF  
HELL BEING ABLE TO CONTINUE THE  
HARVESTING OF HUMAN SOULS. KILLING  
WANDA DIDN'T DETER HIM, IT  
**FREED HIM!**

"THE ONE LAST PRISON WE  
HAD LEFT TO CAGE HIM--  
HIS LOVE FOR HIS WIFE--  
INSTEAD HER DEATH FREED  
HIM OF THAT BURDEN.

"AND NOW HE'S A MAN WITH NOTHING  
ELSE LEFT TO LOSE. HE **DOESN'T CARE**  
IF HE DIES ANYMORE. ALL HE WANTS IS

**REVENGE!...**

AND NOW HE'S GOT THE POWER  
AND STRENGTH TO GET IT!"



"BUT HE HAS A  
WEAKNESS. MORE  
DANGEROUS THAN ANY  
OF US, AND THAT'S  
HIMSELF! I'VE SEEN IT  
FIRSTHAND. HE'S NEVER  
BEEN ABLE TO TAME  
HIS EMOTIONS.  
NOT ONCE WHEN  
IT MATTERED.  
SO, THAT'S WHERE  
WE HAVE TO  
STRIKE."



"SOMEONE HAS  
TO THROW HIM OFF  
HIS GAME. DISRUPT HIS  
PLANS FOR A SINGLE  
SECOND, THEN MAKE THEIR  
**'DEATHBLOW'!**"

"YES, HIS COSTUME MAY BE  
TRANSFORMING, SHOWING MORE  
NEW ABILITIES THAN WE'VE EVER SEEN,  
LIKE RESURRECTING DEAD VILLAINS  
AND SHOWING ITS TRUE MONSTER  
FORM...WELL, WHOEVER CAN TAKE  
THAT FROM SIMMONS WILL BECOME  
A **GOD** THEMSELVES. MORE  
POWERFUL THAN THE GOD  
YOU NOW BEND A  
KNEE TO."



"BUT SINCE SIMMONS  
EXPOSED HIMSELF TO  
THE WORLD, ATTEMPTING  
TO SHINE A LIGHT ON  
OUR EXISTENCE..."



# SPAWN

# GROUND

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## THE HISTORY OF AL SIMMONS – PART 2

The “History of Spawn” has set the stage. Everything that has come before is leading to what comes next. Is the world ready for Al Simmons’ next evolution? Is Al ready for the challenges he will face? The Road to #300 won’t be easy... but it’ll be FUN!!! For us, the readers, Todd continues to unravel Al’s game plan. Jason Shawn Alexander continues to deliver some of the best art in comics on a regular basis. We all hope you’re enjoying the ride and are ready for what comes next.

Like in issue 296, the list below is a “field guide” to this issue’s many character. Enjoy!

### THE ROAD TO #300 CANNOT BE STOPPED!!!

#### PAGE 1

- **Redeemer, The Rapture and Cogliostro:** As we saw last issue, these rival agents of Heaven and Hell have come together to assess the full threat presented by Al Simmons.

#### PAGES 2 & 3

- **Al Simmons, atop his throne of refuse and decay and the downtrodden citizens of Rat City:** Al has called the maze-like alleys of Rat City his home since Spawn #1. The homeless population of the alleys live under Al’s protection, though some say his presence is a danger, others view him as a savior.

#### PAGES 4 & 5

- **The Pits of Hell and the Gilded Halls of Heaven:** The mythical realms where Spawn’s greatest enemies plot and wage war-- even among themselves.
- **Wings of Redemption Spawn:** Al Simmons is a hero touched by both darkness and light. 1st Appearance, Spawn #77.

#### PAGE 6 & 7

- **Cogliostro with the Crown of Hell’s 8th Plane:** Following Al’s defeat of Malebolgia, Cogliostro betrayed Al and stole the Lord of the 8th Plane’s crown.
- **The Heap:** 1st appearance, Spawn #73.
- **Decay:** 1st appearance, Spawn #264.
- **Simon Pure and his legion of vampires:** 1st appearance, Spawn #107.
- **Soul Crusher:** 1st appearance Spawn #270.
- **Clown and his army of possessed civilian psychopaths:** from the Night of 1000 Clown story arc, Spawn #134-138.
- **King Spider:** 1st appearance, Spawn #265.
- **Pig boys:** corrupted youth possessed by Urizen, 1st appearance, Spawn #104.

#### PAGES 8 & 9

- **The agents of Armageddon:** #150-163 These issues showcase the various factions who helped usher in the end of days.



NEXT ISSUE

The Road to #300 becomes an all-out war.

## PAGES 8 & 9

- **Jake Fitzgerald**: the youthful vessel of God: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #101.
- **Kate Fitzgerald**: the youthful vessel of Satan: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #101.
- **Thamuz, the Grand Inquisitor of Hell**: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #150.
- **Mother of Existence**: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #75.
- **The zombie horde**: An undead plague that rose up in the led up to Armageddon.
- **Mammon**: A constant thorn in Al's side, Mammon has long sought to gain control of Al's costume so he can rule the afterlife.
- **The Disciple**: One of Heaven's elite, 1st appearance, *Spawn* #150.

## PAGE 10 & 11

- **She-Spawn (Nyx)**: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #122.
- **Mandarin Spawn**: 1st appearance, *Spawn* Series 14 (toy line), *Spawn* #165.
- **Medieval Spawn**: 1st Appearance, *Spawn* #9.
- **War Spawn**: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #179.
- **Necro Cop**: 1st appearance, *Spawn*: Simony.
- **Gunslinger Spawn**: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #119.
- **Raven Spawn**: 1st appearance, *Hellspawn* #
- **Ninja Spawn**: 1st appearance *Spawn* Series 3 (toy line), *Spawn*.

## PAGES 12 & 13

- Despite all of his victories, Al's constant struggles took a toll. Eventually, following Armageddon, though he'd saved the day and staved off the end of the world, Al give up, ending his own life in *Spawn* #185... or so his enemies thought.

## PAGES 14 & 15

- **Jim Downing**: The mysterious stranger who took the mantle of *Spawn* after Al's "death", 1st appearance, *Spawn* #185 (Al Simmons appeared as Jim in *Spawn* #2).
- **The Old Guard**: Ancient demons, 1st appearance, *Spawn* #203.
- **The Curse**: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #27.
- **Tremor**: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #25.
- **Marc Rosen**: Jim's friend and confidant, 1st appearance, *Spawn* #187.
- **Sara Johnston**: A nurse obsessed with Jim who becomes more than his caretaker, 1st appearance, *Spawn* #185.

## PAGE 16 & 17

- **Al Simmons, resurrected**: Al returned following his "death" and delivered a huge blow to Heaven and Hell when he first locked their gateways to Earth, *Spawn: Resurrection* #1.
- **The death of Wanda**: When unknown agents murdered Al's widow, he took his war to Hell to face Satan himself & free Wanda's soul from damnation. *Spawn* #256-257.

## PAGES 18 & 19

- **New friends for a new war**: Al resurrected old enemies Overtkill, Cy-Gor, The Curse and The Freak to serve as his enforcers. He also revealed his true self to a world that thought he was long dead, *Spawn* #293.

## PAGE 20

- **Cogliostro**: 1st appearance, *Spawn* #9, "Cog" has been Al's mentor in the afterlife, as well as his friend and rival. His current motivations are unknown.

## ONLY 2 MORE ISSUES TO SPAWN #300!

'Til next month. Give 'em Hell!

-Jon

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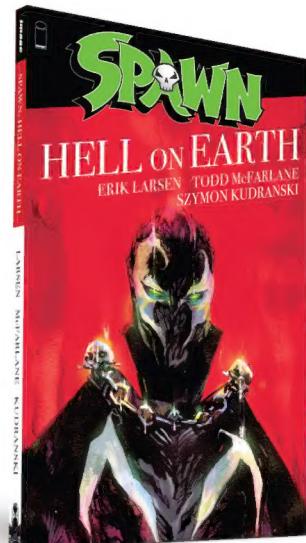


## DEMON'S DAYS ARE NUMBERED.

Killed by his own men, Government Agent Al Simmons struck a deal with the devil, resurrecting him from the depths of hell. Returning to Earth he guards the forgotten alleys of New York City as the warrior Spawn, a hero unlike any other. Seeking answers about his past, Spawn grapples with the dark forces that returned him to earth, battling enemies and discovering unlikely allies.

Even though the doors of Heaven and Hell are now locked, there's enough evil on Earth to keep Spawn busy. But without his full powers, Spawn will have to find a way to fight his enemies without getting himself killed again in *Spawn: Hell on Earth*. Featuring the kinetic art and imaginative story-telling of Image Comics founders **Todd McFarlane** (*Spawn, Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk*) and **Erik Larsen** (*Savage Dragon, Spider-Man*), as well as veteran *Spawn* artist **Szymon Kudranski**, this is one collection you don't want to miss!

The *Spawn: Hell on Earth* trade paperback collects 12 issues – a whole year's worth – of this fan-favorite story into one thick volume. All at a hard to beat price.



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IT'S OUR  
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# the RIDE

BURNING DESIRE

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WITH ADAM HUGHES CHRIS BRUNNER RICO RENZI CULLY HAMMER TOMM COKER ROB HAYNES

DO NOT CROSS

JUNE  
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# SPAWN

TODD MCFARLANE -  
JASON SHAWN ALEXANDER

**DARK HORROR  
IN STORES NOW!**

